

Great Society Historiography Paper

Due Date: Friday May 13th by 2:30 (Both Classes)

What is historiography?

The term *historiography* implies to how historians have reconstructed the past using various methods of historical research.

Task: You will write an analytical essay that answers the below focus question. This paper is a historiography paper that requires you to draw on OR contrast to the scholarship of Joseph Califano OR George Will. Below is a clear outline of how to effectively complete this task.

Debate:

Historians debate the progress that has been made as a result of the Great Society. While some argue LBJ made great strides in providing for the American people, others argue that the Great Society programs have created a dependency on government that have not effectively curbed poverty.

FOCUS QUESTION:

Did the Great Society create greater economic opportunity and provide for the general welfare of Americans, or was it an expensive failed experiment of the federal government?

ASSIGNMENT:

You will:

- Create a central claim (thesis) that addresses the above focus question.
- Write an analytical essay that advances your argument and effectively situates (places or positions) your argument in the current historical scholarship of Califano and/or Will. In other words, when writing your claim you should agree with or contrast to one of the historians.
- Draw on historical scholarship as a **source of evidence** (citing facts/information a historian uses) and **supporting reasoning for your paper** (using claims/reasoning of Califano and/or Will to support your reasoning).

HOW TO WRITE THIS PAPER:

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| Develop the Field | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read the attached articles by Joseph Califano and George Will. - Understand and summarize these arguments - Use the conclusions/notes from the Socratic seminar to help make sense of Will and Califano |
| Develop Your Central Claim | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop your own answer to the above focus question as your central claim. DO NOT just use the argument of Will or Califano - Be able to explain how your central claim relates to or contrast with the claims of Will or Califano (only need one historian). |

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| Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions should use the following outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include multiple sentences of context (time and place and key concepts in the central claim) ○ Identify our question- Do not directly restate the focus question but re-word as to capture the essence. ○ Summarize how Will or Califano has answered this question ○ Identify your entry point into the historical discussion by way of how your central claim relates to that of the historians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Ex. "While Califano...the Great Society actually..." § Ex. "Will fails to account for...when considering this factor, the Great Society can be seen..." ○ Transition to your central claim ○ Conclude with your central claim |
| Sub-Claims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the central claim may be stated concisely, it should be sophisticated enough in its ideas to be clearly proven through multiple subclaims (body paragraphs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You will write two body paragraph for this essay. - Your sub-claims must contain an argument that supports your central claim and introduces the information in the paragraph. |
| Evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meets SPARC criteria • Sources Used to Find Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The youtube of LBJ documentary posted on wikispace ○ Primary source (LBJ Michigan Commencement Speech) ○ The Washington Post Article "The Great Society at 50" ○ Facts you have found in the George Will or Joseph Califano- Be careful to only cite the fact NOT the reasoning/claims offered by these historians. |
| Reasoning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains how evidence supports the subclaim and in turn the central claim • Your reasoning is bolstered by the historical claims of George Will or Joseph Califano ("back up dancers") <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is required for this paper that in one of your body paragraphs you use the historical claims provided by Will or Califano to support/bolster your reasoning. |

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| Body Paragraphs | <p>Body Paragraphs should use the following outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub claim that supports and advance your central claim • Minimum of two pieces of SPARC evidence that support sub claim/central claim.. • Reasoning - Provide an explanation as to how your evidence supports your sub claim. • In one of your paragraphs you must include the claims/reasoning of Will or Califano to bolster your reasoning. The historian's claim/reasoning you choose to use should serve as a "back-up dancer" to the reasoning you already provided. |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate our question • Summarize your central claim (Do not directly restate it) • Identify how your central claim relates to Califano or Will's argument • Explain what your central claim adds to the field, and how it enhances our understanding of the topic |
| Citation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicago style footnotes and bibliography |

SPARC

Sufficient

- Enough to be convincing and support all parts of the claim
not too little
not too much
- not repeated/recycled
- varied and from varied sources (when necessary)
- addresses counters (when necessary)

Precise

- specific/detailed
- used in the right place

Accurate

- true and responsible
- based on an effective reading and understanding of the source
- written/ conveyed accurately

Relevant

- connected to the Central-Claim and/or sub-claim (OR part of the Central-Claim/sub-claim)
- well-chosen from what's available, i.e. you haven't ignored more relevant evidence available elsewhere

Credible

- from a trustworthy and appropriate source
- used appropriately, i.e. not beyond the source's limitations
- cited appropriately for the task

Example of Historiography Introduction

QUESTION:

Has the American government facilitated or constrained the movement of marginalized people to the center of American social life?

Freedom: An Economic Reaction

From before America's founding through the present day, the definition of freedom has been expanded based on the needs of people at a given time. While the definition has maintained its original meaning, it has continued to grow alongside the country. From the thirteen colonies and their attempt to add the right from taxation to the definition, to the Reagan Administration which added the right to keep what one has earned, the perceived characterization of freedom has grown to cover a range of rights based on the current economic state of a country. Additionally, liberty's definition grew to include the common man's rights during the Jacksonian Era, economic rights during the Progressive Era, women's rights during World War 1, economic security during The Great Depression and Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration and the right to happiness during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency. Scholar Eric Foner demonstrated his understanding of freedom as constant expansion based on wars and other global events. However, while Foner viewed international events as liberty's defining factor, liberty actually rests on a country's economic standpoint and how it affects the people. The needs of the people and the rights they demanded are based on the economy due to the environment it produced. Within the United States, the concept of freedom constantly is expanded to fit the needs of the people based on the economic state of the country.

Using the letters below - label on the writing sample above where each part is located.

Introduction

- Introductions should use the following outline:
 - A ○ Include multiple sentences of context (time and place and key concepts in the central claim)
 - B ○ Identify our question
 - C ○ Summarize how your two historians have answered this question
 - D ○ Identify your entry point into the historical discussion by way of how your central claim relates to the field established by the work of other historians
 - E ○ Transition to your central claim
 - F ○ Conclude with your central claim

Practice

Identify Evidence + Reasoning

Furthermore, in the Progressive Era, 1890 to 1920, as the unemployment rate rose and the working conditions lowered, the masses demanded freedom to include economic rights. In 1895 the unemployment rate reached a whopping 20%¹². With a fifth of population lacking a job, "the basis of freedom now required expanding the notion of citizenship to ensure that every American could find, as his right, a job at a decent wage"¹³. Amidst the struggling economy, the definition of freedom expanded to include the right to hold a job. However, finding a job was not the only blatant issue at the time. Workplace conditions were lowered as people were willing to accept any job no matter the circumstances due to their financial desperation. This phenomenon was defined as "wage slavery, an accurate description of laborers forced to toil under conditions to which they do not consent"¹⁴. The idea of 'wage slavery' allowed the employer to provide unsatisfactory conditions for workers as men were so desperate for employment, they were willing to toil under even the poorest of conditions. The combination of mass unemployment and poor working condition drove the people to demand economic rights be included in the definition of freedom.

¹² "The 1930's." The University of Rhode Island.

<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/newecn/Courses/Art/INT1/Mac/1930s/1930sAA.html>.

¹³ Foner, Eric. "Progressive Freedom." In *The Story of American Freedom*, 144. Vol. 7. New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.

¹⁴ Foner, 143.

Using the letters below indicate in paragraph above where each are listed.

A- Evidence

B- Use of historical scholarship as evidence

C- Reasoning

D- Use of historical scholarship in reasoning
(back up dancer)